269

~~Bolter Plot~~

$ 455 Liberty

83

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Senator Hayakawa:

This is in response to your letter of July 6 requesting our comments on a letter to you from Thomas P. O'Reilly concerning the Israeli attack on the ~~U.S.S. Liberty~~. We have provided a similar response to Mr. O'Reilly's request to Senator Cranston on June ~~28~~.

The United States has consistently maintained since 1967 that the Government of Israel is responsible for payment of compensation--both for the loss of life and injury which resulted from the incident and for damage to the vessel. The Government of Israel immediately accepted its responsibility for the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty. The Department of State has never found any substance to the claim that Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan bore any specific responsibility for the attack.

In 1967, our Embassy in Tel Aviv presented to the Government of Israel claims totaling $3,323,500 on behalf of the families of the 34 men killed in the attack. After negotiations, the Government of Israel paid the full amount in 1968. In 1969, our Embassy presented claims totaling $3,452,275 on behalf of the 164 injured members of the crew. The Government of Israel paid the full amount claimed that year.

With regard to the U.S. Government claim for damage to the vessel, in 1968 the United States presented a claim for $7.6 million to the Government of Israel. The Israeli Government denied responsibility but offered to pay a nominal sum, an offer which was rejected.

The Honorable
S. I. Hayakawa,
United States Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Kelley DATE 1/21/83
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA &r FOI EXEMPTIONS

UNCLASSIFIED

The United States held to its position, however, and the Israeli Government has now agreed to open negotiations. Our objective remains that of obtaining adequate compensation for the damages inflicted upon the Liberty in accordance with international law.

Sincerely,

J. Brian Atwood
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned.

Drafted:NEA/IAI:MMDean:mgk
7/18/79 x0102-0751

Cleared:NEA/IAI:CHill
NEA:MDraper
H:RFlaten

DECLASSIFIED